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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION

ON THE

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

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Washington, D. C.

Tuesday, May 19, 1964

The President's Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 4:00 p.m., in the Hearing Room, Fourth Floor, 200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast, Washington, D. C., Chief Justice Earl Warren, presiding.

PRESENT:

Chief Justice Earl Warren, Chairman

Senator Richard B. Russell, Member

Senator John Sherman Cooper, Member

Representative Hale Boggs, Member

Representative Gerald R. Ford, Member

John J. McCloy, Member

Allen W. Dulles, Member

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J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel

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to the United States of America. There is certainly nothing in that record that would convict him of disloyalty to the country.

But he is a promoter of causes. He will be a controversial figure. And in this report --- we are going to have plenty of trouble with this report in the years to come without that.

Rep. Boggs. Senator, may I ask you in connection with what you are saying -- I am just wondering whether he suffers more -- I don't know what word to use -- this Commission is going to terminate pretty quick, anyway, all of us -- whether he suffers more under those circumstances, as suggested by Allen, or under these other circumstances, with people making these charges all over the Floor of the Senate and the House.

I don't know where his situation is best, to be quite frank with you, just looking at it from his point of view. What do you think?

Sen. Russell. I don't know. I have a great compassion for any individual who gets himself in this kind of fix -- and his family.

I was brought up in a controversial family. I know what it is to have people try to burn down your house. So it doesn't make any difference how violently I disagree with an individual, when he gets in this position I have a feeling of great compassion for him, because I know anything that is done, it is not going to be to his benefit. Anything we do is not going to completely

cure this question.

There will be some people who will be doubting his loyalty. And it may have gone so far that it cannot get much worse.

I frankly was thinking about it solely from the standpoint of the Commission -- what Mr. Ford called the image of the Commission, which would have a great deal to do with the reception of such report as we make.

I haven't been here as much as I should. But from making an earnest effort at long range to try to follow behind, I am not sure that we have got all the facts now even as meticulously as we went into every single straw that has been brought out to Mr. Rankin's attention.

Sen. Cooper. I said a few minutes ago that while I know we do not, and I am sure I do not want to hurt an individual, particularly the question of someone's loyalty, and bring it into issue, when it is not an issue. The question I raise -- perhaps we could have a little more discussion on it -- whether in this instance we are charged with a very particular duty to make a report which we know will be objective from our viewpoints -- we know it will -- and also will give -- have the suppor as far as you can of its fairness and objectivity.

Now, the points that worried me about this man were these:

One -- because we have had testimony about Oswald's activities in the Cuban affair -- as Senator Russell said, this man -- it is not the same thing, but he has been interested, also,

Star. It is entitled "Warren Probe. Redlich may go in cutback. The Warren Commission investigating President Kennedy's assassination may be able to get off a political hotseat by including Norman Redlich, its controversial staff consultant, in a general staff cutback early next month. The idea is being broached quietly as one way to avoid the distasteful alternative of firing Mr. Redlich, the New York University Law Professor, because of his affiliation with the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. Republican members of Congress and some conservative groups have been mounting an increasing attack on the Warren panel over Mr. Redlich's connection with an organization they consider to be a Communist-front."

And then it goes on at great length to elaborate on that thing. And it tells things about this -- I don't know --

Sen. Russell. Is that a letter?

The Chairman. No -- this is an article with a byline of J. T. Ter Horst, Star Special Writer. And it goes on to tell a lot of other things.

I don't know where they got the information.

But it is now in the press and with the people that we are going to crawl, and we are going to hide behind a cutback rather than to face our responsibility of firing him. And I am just sure that anything we do at this time is going to foment trouble rather than to alleviate it.

I have this idea, gentlemen -- that if we don't clear